

Jon Arrizabalaga \*

*De morbo gallico cum aliis:*  
another incunabular edition of Gaspar Torrella's  
*Tractatus cum consiliis contra pudendagram*  
*seu morbum gallicum* (1497)

1. INTRODUCTION

*Morbus gallicus* (' French Pox '), the paradigm of the so-called ' new diseases ', was one of the diseases which received most attention in the European Renaissance. Its outbreak during the last decade of the fifteenth century gave rise to a profusion of medical writings, both printed and manuscript, which may have reached two hundred or more by the year 1600. Among the earliest printed writings were those of Gaspar Torrella, a Spanish physician living at the Borgian court in Rome (Valencia, c. 1452/53 - Rome, c. 1519/20).<sup>1</sup>

Torrella's writings on *morbus gallicus* consist of two printed works: the *Tractatus cum consiliis contra pudendagram seu morbum gallicum* (Rome, P. de la Turre, 22 Nov 1497) and the *Dialogus de dolore cum tractatu de ulceribus in pudendagra evenire solitis* (Rome, J. Besicken and M. de Amsterdam, 31 Oct 1500). Both are included amongst the numerous writings on *morbus gallicus* edited by Aloysius Luisinus in 1566-1567.<sup>2</sup>

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\* Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine. Dept. of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge. U.K. On sabbatical leave from: Dpto. de Historia de la Medicina. Facultad de Medicina. Universidad de Cantabria. 39071 Santander (Spain).

<sup>1</sup> Gaspar Torrella studied medicine at Siena (Italy) and spent most of his later life in Rome, as a member of the Borgian court; particularly linked to Caesar Borgia, he was also proto-physician and domestic prelate to the popes Alexander VI (1492-1503) and Julius II (1503-1513), not to mention the Sardinian bishopric of Santa Giusta held by him since 1494 until his death. For more information on Gaspar Torrella's life and works see my Ph. D. dissertation (inedit) *La obra sifilográfica de Gaspar Torrella: edición, traducción y estudio de su " Tractatus cum consiliis contra pudendagram seu morbum gallicum " (Roma 1497)* supervised by the Professors J. A. Paniagua and L. García Ballester and submitted at Zaragoza University (Spain) on 12 January 1983.

<sup>2</sup> A. LUISINUS (ed.), *De morbo gallico omnia quae extant apud omnes medicos*

Although there do not seem to have been any further specific editions of the *Dialogus*, the *Tractatus* was soon re-edited under the new title *De morbo gallico cum aliis* (Rome, anonymous printer, no date).<sup>3</sup> Also extant is an early incomplete English manuscript translation from the second edition of the *Tractatus*, which was edited by E. L. Zimmermann in 1937.<sup>4</sup>

Torrella dedicated both editions of his first work and his second work on *morbis gallicis* to Caesar Borgia, who had been treated by Torrella for the disease. Until he fell into disgrace in Rome after the death of Alexander VI in 1503, the Borgia was Torrella's master, to whom the Valencian physician dedicated another of his works eventually published on 7 January 1507.<sup>5</sup>

*cuiuscunque nationis ... Venetiis*, apud J. Zilettum, 1566-1567, I, pp. 421-476. Revised by H. Boerhaave, Luisinus's collection was published once again in 18th century under the new title *Aphrodisiacus sive de lue venerea ...* (Lugdunum Batavorum, J. A. Langerak and J. and H. Verbeek 1728, 2 voll.); for Torrella's works Cfr. I, coll. 491-554. According to some sources another edition of Luisinus's collection must have been published before the end of the 16th century (Venetiis, apud Baretium Baretii 1599), but no copy seems to have survived. Cfr. P. MANDOSIO, *⊙EATPON in quo maximorum christiani orbis pontificum archiatros ...* [1696] In: G. MARINI (ed.), *Degli archiatri pontifici*. Rome, Pagliarini 1784, II, pp. 54-55; J. J. MANGET, *Bibliotheca scriptorum medicorum veterum et recentiorum ...*, Geneva, Perachon & Cramer 1731, II, 2<sup>a</sup> parte, p. 386; V. XIMENO, *Escritores del Reyno de Valencia ...*, Valencia, J. Esteval Dolz 1747-1749, I, pp. 74-75.

<sup>3</sup> From now on I shall simply refer to these two works as the *Tractatus* and the *Dialogus*. On the other hand, I shall refer to the second edition of Torrella's *Tractatus* as the *De morbo gallico*. A facsimile reprint of the *Tractatus* was edited by Karl Sudhoff in 1924. Cfr. K. SUDHOFF, *Zehn Syphilisdrucke aus den Jahren 1495-1498*. Mailand, R. Lier & Co. 1924, pp. 185-230 (English version: Florence, R. Lier & Co. 1925). Several bibliographical lists mention a would-be third edition placed at Pavia in 1521, but none refers the printer's identity. Cfr. J. RODRÍGUEZ, *Biblioteca Valentina ...*, Valencia, J. A. Lucas 1747, p. 159; V. XIMENO, *op. cit.*; A. HALLER von, *Bibliotheca medicae practicae ...*, Bern, E. Haller & Basel, J. Schweighauser 1766-1788, I, pp. 479-480; N. ANTONIO, *Bibliotheca Hispana Vetus ...*, Madrid, J. de Ibarra 1788, II, p. 344; A. HERNÁNDEZ MOREJÓN, *Historia bibliográfica de la Medicina española*, Madrid, Imp. Vda. de Jordán-Imp. de la calle S. Vicente 1842-1852, I, pp. 312-314; A. CHINCHILLA, *Historia general de la Medicina española*, Valencia, Imp. López y Cía.-Imp. Mateu y Cervera 1841-1856, I, pp. 135-138. However, E. L. Zimmermann denies the existence of such a edition, which he claims to be an invention of Schenklius copied by other authors. Cfr. E. L. ZIMMERMANN, *An early English manuscript on syphilis. A fragmentary translation from the second edition of Gaspar Torrella's «Tractatus cum consiliis contra pudendagram seu morbum gallicum»*, «Bulletin of History of Medicine», V, 1937, pp. 461-482: 473.

<sup>4</sup> E. L. ZIMMERMANN, *op. cit.* It is the manuscript no. 389 (ff. 147-153) of the Sloane Collection, British Museum. Cfr. C. CREIGHTON, *A History of Epidemics in Britain*, 2<sup>a</sup> ed., London, Frank Cass & Co. 1965, I, p. 415.

<sup>5</sup> G. TORRELLA, *Judicium universale de portentis presagis et ostensis rerumque admirabilium ac solis et lune defectibus et cometis*, Rome, J. Besicken 1507.

From its colophon, the *Tractatus* was certainly printed in Rome by P. de la Turre on 22 November 1497.<sup>6</sup> At the beginning of its dedicatory letter Caesar Borgia appears bearing the title of « Cardinal-Deacon 'Valentino' with the title of Santa Maria Nuova ». <sup>7</sup> However, the colophon of the second edition only says *Impressum Rome*,<sup>8</sup> and nothing about either the printer or the date (Plate 1). This second edi-

¶ quare sanguis movet in aurota sequens motu folio; aut qz natura maiorē quantitatem eius generat in nocte q̄ in die ratione somni; et sic sua sagacitate eū movet tali hora post eius generationē vt emundetur ab inficiētibz. Colera movetur hora tertiarā nā ea hora sol calefacit aerē magis q̄ in mane et natura sagax ea hora ipsam movet ne sanguinem in riat. Delicollia movetur post motū colere sequens quadram frigidam et sicā; et vt sanguis emundetur a supfluitatibz melancolicis. Slegma movetur circa mediā noctem sequens quadram frigidā et humidā; et ratione inferiorū natura sagax in cuius sagacitate nō est finis. ¶ Et sic cū auxilio dei omnipotentis ac gloriosissime virginis Marie nō solū ipse remansit liber; verum etiā spero preservabit. Et postq̄ decrevit ad alia dūertere et hinc cōsilia sine imponere; supest vt oratio quā sanctus Damianus genibus flexis in omnibus potationibus per euz ex bibitis dicere solebat; sinem imponat cuius vba sunt ista. ¶ Omnipotēs eterne deus qui dedisti medicinā ad sanandōs corporū humanorū infirmitates; va benedictiones tuā sanctā de celo super hanc medicinā; vt in cuius corpore introierit; sanitate mentis et corporis suscipere valeat. Per xpm dñm nostrū qui vivit et regnat in secula seculorū Amen. ¶ Et quis vero faceret dicere hāc orationē ab aliquo deo ro prebitero dicta missa pro infirmo super medicinā suscipiendā in presentia infirmi virtutes medicine augetur et celerius curaretur infirmus. Finis.

#### ¶ Impressum Rome

Fig. 1. - Torrella's *De morbo gallico cum aliis*. Last page (c. A2r).

<sup>6</sup> *Tractatus*, signat. f<sub>3</sub>v: « Impressum Rome per magistrum Petrum de la Turre anno vero MCCCCLXXXVII die XXII Novembris sedente Alexandro Sexto pontifice maximo ».

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, signat. a<sub>2</sub>r: « Ad reverendissimum et illustrissimum in Christo patrem et dominum dominum Cesarem de Borgia, titulo Sancte Marie Nove diaconum cardinalem Valentinum ... ».

<sup>8</sup> *De morbo gallico*, signat. c<sub>6</sub>v.

tion is addressed to Louis of Bourbon, the Bishop of Avranches, in response to whose requests Torrella affirms that he has decided to re-edit his *Tractatus*.<sup>9</sup> However, it retains the dedication to Caesar Borgia, who is already bearing his new title of « Duke of Valentinois ».<sup>10</sup>

The *De morbo gallico* has been considered nearly universally to be the second edition of Torrella's *Tractatus contra pundendagram seu morbum gallicum*.<sup>11</sup> The aim of this note is to prove that it is also an incunable, and that it is not a book printed in the year 1505 or 1506.<sup>12</sup> I will try to show that it must have appeared in about 1498,<sup>13</sup> and certainly not after February 1500. My arguments are based on the information provided by Torrella's own works, and by other sources and secondary literature on the Papal court of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

## 2. POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES FOR THE BORGHIAS AT ROME AFTER THE DEATH OF ALEXANDER VI IN 1503

General historical circumstances make it very unlikely that Torrella had dedicated one of his books to Caesar Borgia in the years 1505 or 1506. After the death of Alexander VI in August 1503 and the ephem-

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, signat. a<sub>1v</sub>: « Reverendo in Christo patri et domino domino Ludovico de Borbonio, episcopo dignissimo Abrincensi ... propter preces tuas que mihi precepta fuerunt, decrevi iterum hunc parvum tractatum impressoribus tradere ... » (italics supplied).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, signat. a<sub>2r</sub>: « Ad illustrissimum dominum Cesarem de Borgia, ducem Valentiniensem ... ».

<sup>11</sup> Only the Mazarine library catalogue suggests that the *De morbo gallico* is the *editio princeps* of Torrella's *Tractatus* (1497), by placing the former in the year 1493. Cfr. O. MARAIS - A. DUFRESNE DE SAINT-LEON, *Catalogue des incunables de la Bibliothèque Mazarine*, Paris, H. Welter 1893, p. 385.

<sup>12</sup> A. C. KLEBS, e.g., says: « De morbo gallico ... did not appear before 1506 », the *Catalogue of Incunables in the Italian Libraries*: « [... c. 1505] »; the *British Museum Catalogue*: « [1505?] »; the *National Library of Medicine Catalogue*: « [... 1506?] ». Cfr. A. C. KLEBS, *Incunabula Scientifica et Medica* [1938]. Reprint: Hildesheim, G. Olms 1963, p. 322; *INDICE generale degli incunabuli delle biblioteche d'Italia*, Roma, Libreria dello Stato 1943-1981, V, p. 204; *BRITISH Library General Catalogue of Printed Books to 1975 (The)*, London, K. G. Saur 1979, CCCXXVIII, p. 13; R. J. DURLING, *A Catalogue of the Sixteenth Century Printed Books in the National Library of Medicine*, Bethesda, U. S. Dept. of Health, Education, and Welfare 1967, p. 567.

<sup>13</sup> *INDEX Catalogue of the Library of the Surgeon General's Office*, Washington, s. I, XIV/2, p. 653; E. L. ZIMMERMANN, *op. cit.*, pp. 473, 479. L. Polain includes the *De morbo gallico cum aliis* in his *Catalogue Général des Incunables des Bibliothèques Publiques de France* [Nendeln (Liechtenstein), Kraus-Thomson Org. Ltd. 1970, XXIV, no. 11.122], but does not say anything about the printing date.

eral reign of Pius III, Giuliano della Rovere was proclaimed Pope Julius II (1503-1513) on 1 November. Soon afterwards Julius II, who had always been hostile to the Borgian family, first confined Caesar in the Torre Borgia and then imprisoned him. In August 1504 a policy of friendly coexistence between the Spanish kings and the new Pope resulted in Caesar's deportation and imprisonment in Spain. In the autumn 1506 he finally succeeded in escaping from the royal fortress at Medina del Campo, but scarcely six months later, on 12 March 1507, he was killed in a skirmish at Viana fighting for his brother-in-law, the king of Navarra. At the same time from the beginning of his reign Julius II unleashed a systematic purge of the Borgias and their supporters with the aim of banishing them all from Rome.<sup>14</sup> Torrella seems to have been one of the few survivors, as, at least from the year 1506, he held the same position under the new Pope as he had under Alexander VI, i.e. protophysician and domestic prelate.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, in 1506 he published a long *Regimen sanitatis* for his new master.<sup>16</sup> The reason for Gaspar Torrella's amazing 'political' survival was probably the great esteem in which Julius II held his medical services: in addition to Caesar Borgia and many other ecclesiastical and civic personalities at the time, the new pope is known to have suffered from *morbus gallicus*.<sup>17</sup>

Despite his usefulness to Julius II, it is unthinkable that at this time Torrella would have had the boldness to dedicate one of his books to

<sup>14</sup> For information pertaining to the well-known history of the Borgian family and, particularly, of Caesar Borgia, in Rome at that time, cfr., e.g., L. PASTOR, *The History of the Popes ...*, London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. 1891, VI, pp. 185-220, 232-246; W. H. WOODWARD, *Caesar Borgia. A Biography*, London, Chapman and Hall 1913, pp. 319-377; L. COLLISON-MORLEY, *The Story of the Borgias*, London, G. Routledge & Sons 1932, pp. 238-278; M. MALLETT, *The Borgias. The Rise and Fall of a Renaissance Dynasty*, London, Paladin 1971, pp. 215-227.

<sup>15</sup> At the end of the *Regimen sanitatis* (cited in footnote 16 below) which Torrella dedicated to Julius II, he wrote: « Finit dyalogus pro regimine sanitatis valde utilis, editus a magistro Gaspare Torrella natione Valentino episcopo Sancte Juste ac santissimi domini nostri Julii II medico ac prelato domestico ... Anno a nativitate domini MDVI ... » (signat. l<sub>3r</sub>).

<sup>16</sup> G. TORRELLA, *Pro regimine seu preservatione sanitatis. De esculentis et poculentis dialogus*, Rome, J. Besicken 1506. A copy of this *Regimen* available at the National Library of Medicine (Bethesda) bounded with another of the *De morbo gallico* is the only evidence given by the N.L.M. Catalogue in support of its claiming the printing date of 1506 for the latter. Cfr. R. J. DURLING, *op. cit.*, p. 567.

<sup>17</sup> Cfr. P. GRASSI, *Le due spedizioni militari di Giulio II ...*, a cura di L. Frati. Bologna, Regia Tipografia 1886 (« Documenti e Studi pubblicati per cura della R.D. di Storia Patria per le provincie di Romagna », I), p. 63.

the Borgia. To be sure, as said above, in 1507 Torrella published another book dedicated to Caesar Borgia, « Duke of Romagna ». However, from the editor's preface it had obviously been written by him a long time before (*olim*), though it had never been sent to the Borgia. Torrella's poor health also compelled him to delegate its editing to one Antonius Firmandus, who in his foreword did his best to remove any suspicion of ties with Caesar Borgia by displaying his loathing for the latter's way of life.<sup>18</sup>

None of these features can be found in Torrella's *De morbo gallico*. Yet (as we shall soon see) the author's active participation in its preparation cannot be doubted, thereby ruling out the possibility of its having been a pirated edition.

Unfortunately, why the printer of *De morbo gallico* neither signed nor dated his work cannot be answered. Several important library catalogues agree in attributing its printing paternity to Johannes Besicken,<sup>19</sup> who is known to have used as many as nine different typefaces up to the year 1500, and not to have signed many of the books he printed.<sup>20</sup> But this statement need not contradict our printing date proposed earlier, both because of the date when the printer Besicken was active in Rome (between the years 1493 and 1507),<sup>21</sup> and because of the close typographical similarities between the *De morbo gallico* and the rest of Torrella's books printed by J. Besicken.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> *Judicium* (see footnote 5 above), signats. a<sub>2</sub>r-a<sub>2</sub>v. The dedication says: « Ad illustrissimum Cesarem Borgiam Romandiole ducem Gasparis Torrelle ... » (signat. a<sub>2</sub>v). Caesar Borgia was given the Dukedom of Romagna by Alexander VI about May 1501. This was removed by Julius II just three years later, in May 1504. Cfr. C. ALVISI, *Cesare Borgia, duca di Romagna*, Imola, Tip. d'I. Galeati e figlio 1878, pp. 498, 501-503, 589-591. On the other hand, the 'prodiges' reported to have happened at Rome in September 1502 come at the end of the long chronological list of those which Torrella collected from the history of mankind (signat. a<sub>8</sub>v). It strongly suggests that the *Judicium* must have been written about the end of the year 1502.

<sup>19</sup> Cfr. *BIBLIOTECA Colombina de Sevilla. Catálogo de sus libros impresos*, Sevilla-Madrid 1880-1948, III, p. 59; *BRITISH Library... op. cit.*; R. J. DURLING, *op. cit.*

<sup>20</sup> Cfr. R. PROCTOR, *An Index to the Early Printed Books in the British Museum ...*, London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. 1898, pp. 260-261; F. J. NORTON, *Italian Printers 1501-1520 ...*, London, Bowes & Bowes 1958, pp. 94-95.

<sup>21</sup> Cfr. C. BURGER, *Indices uberrimi*. In: L. HAIN (ed.), *Repertorium bibliographicum ...*, Lipsiae, O. Harrassowitz 1891, V, p. 35; F. J. NORTON, *op. cit.*, pp. 91, 94-95.

<sup>22</sup> Cfr. G. TORRELLA, I. *Consilium de egritudine pestifera et contagiosa ovina cognominata ... quam Hispani modorrillam vocant* (Rome, J. Besicken 1505); II. *Qui cupit a peste non solum preservari sed etiam curari hoc legat consilium* (Rome, J. Besicken, after 1505); III. *Pro regimine seu preservatione sanitatis ...* (Rome, J. Besicken 1506); IIII. *Judicium universale de portentis ...* (Rome, J. Besicken 7.1.1507).

### 3. THE MEDICAL CONTENTS OF TORRELLA'S WORKS

Torrella did not introduce great changes in his *De morbo gallico* in comparison to the *Tractatus*, the first edition of this work printed on 22 November 1497. There is no omission worth mentioning, and, apart from corrections of misprints in the *editio princeps* by the printer, the only significant change was Torrella's addition of several paragraphs. Most of these were citations of authorities to support his account; the remainder doubtless reflected Torrella's clinical and therapeutic experiences in the period since the appearance of the first edition.<sup>23</sup>

By comparing the contents of both editions of Torrella's first work on *morbus gallicus* with the *Dialogus* of 1500, at least two arguments may be found to endorse the view that the *De morbo gallico* was printed before Torrella had even started to write the *Dialogus*, i.e. 1 March 1500.

First, Torrella added fifteen lines to the end of the *De morbo gallico cum aliis*. There he introduced the notion that humoral movement was dependent upon the influences of the sun and moon (in line with Galen's *De criticis diebus*) to explain the movement of pains throughout the whole body. The new paragraph begins: « For the moment, this is sufficient, as (God willing) *some day I will write* copiously on humoral movement ... ». <sup>24</sup> This promise of a lengthy dissertation on the subject is fulfilled in the *Dialogus* of 1500.<sup>25</sup>

The second argument is based on Torrella's therapeutic use of mercury. At the time mercury was used primarily to remove skin lesions linked with *morbus gallicus*, and Torrella's attitude towards its therapeutic use changed during the three years between the printing of the *Tractatus* (22 Nov 1497) and the *Dialogus* (31 Oct 1500). In the earlier work Torrella recommended the use of quicksilver (*argentum vivum*) rather than the silver sublimate (*argentum [vivum] sublimatum*) as an ingredient of six different preparations containing mercury: five ointments to be applied locally containing quicksilver, only one lotion for the whole body containing silver sublimate.<sup>26</sup> But the situation is re-

<sup>23</sup> *De morbo gallico*, signats. a<sub>2</sub>r, a<sub>3</sub>v, a<sub>4</sub>r, a<sub>4</sub>v, a<sub>5</sub>r, a<sub>7</sub>r, a<sub>7</sub>v, a<sub>8</sub>r, a<sub>8</sub>v, b<sub>2</sub>r, b<sub>3</sub>v-b<sub>4</sub>r, b<sub>5</sub>v-b<sub>6</sub>r, c<sub>5</sub>r, c<sub>6</sub>r-c<sub>6</sub>v.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, signats. c<sub>6</sub>r-c<sub>6</sub>v: « Pro nunc ista sufficient, nam Deo duce *indies latius scribam* de motu humorum ... » (italics supplied).

<sup>25</sup> *Dialogus*, signats. c<sub>1</sub>r-c<sub>2</sub>v.

<sup>26</sup> *Tractatus*, signats. c<sub>3</sub>v, c<sub>4</sub>r. Curiously, all the preparations including mercury appear

versed in the 1500 work. There, Torrella only speaks of silver sublimate as a remedy: on five occasions it is said to be an essential ingredient of preparations to be applied locally (three ointments and two lotions).<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, in this second work Torrella calls strongly for protophysicians to intervene against « those ignorant impostors and swindlers » who persist in prescribing ointments with high doses of *argentum vivum* to those who suffer from *morbus gallicus*.<sup>28</sup> This warning (absent from his *Tractatus* of three years earlier) against the therapeutic use of mercury by unqualified people is not at all unusual: the increasing social demand for healers to deal with *morbus gallicus* was resulting in what the professional physicians could not but consider an intrusion, and at the same time the serious side-effects of mercury were becoming better-known by that time. As Torrella himself pointed out in his *dialogus*, the abuse of this remedy had resulted in the deaths of two members of the Borgia family and the death throes of one Spanish cardinal.<sup>29</sup> Why, then, did Torrella not only persist in using mercury as a remedy after such accidents, but also resort to the use of corrosive sublimate, a very corrosive and poisonous soluble salt of mercury? It is probable that the reasons lie in the corrosive sublimate being more easily handled by comparison with the metallic mercury.<sup>30</sup>

So far as the therapeutical use of mercury is concerned, the contents of Torrella's *De morbo gallico* are virtually identical with those of the first edition. The second edition reproduces all the preparations con-

in the first part of the book, and no trace of such a remedy can be found in the *consilia* constituting the second part. We do not know whether this fact has any meaning or not.

<sup>27</sup> *Dialogus*, signats. e<sub>1v</sub>-e<sub>2r</sub>, f<sub>8v</sub>, g<sub>6v</sub>.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, signats. e<sub>3v</sub>-e<sub>6v</sub>.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, signat. e<sub>6r</sub>. Torrella mentions *Alphonsus de Borgia et eius frater* as already dead, and the *cardinalem Segobricensem* as dying. The latter is doubtless the cardinal Bartolome Martí, who finally died on 25 March 1500. Cfr. C. EUBEL, *Hierarchia Catholica Medii et Recentioris Aevi*. Ed. altera, Monasterii, L. Regensbergianae 1913-1923, II, p. 23. Alfonso de Borgia may be a canon who died at Rome in the beginning of 1500. Cfr. J. BURCKARD, *Liber Notarum ...*, a cura di E. Celani, Città di Castello, II, p. 11. However, as he is not included in any of the genealogical trees reconstructed by M. Batllori, we cannot identify « his brother ». The latter could well be the cardinal Joan de Borja-Llançol, Caesar's second cousin, who died on 14 January 1500. Cfr. M. BATLLORI, *La stirpe di san Francesco Borgia dal duecento al cinquecento* « Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu », XLI, 1972, pp. 5-47: 25; C. EUBEL, *op. cit.*, II, p. 23.

<sup>30</sup> According to J. K. PROKSCH, *Die Quecksilbersublimatcuren gegen Syphilis*, Wien, V. des Verfassers 1876, pp. 11-13, Gaspar Torrella seems to be one of the earliest syphilographers, if not the first, to use the corrosive sublimate (*argentum sublimatum*) as a remedy against *morbus gallicus*.

taining mercury appearing in the first edition, and adds no new ones.<sup>31</sup> It is only in an introductory letter to the Bishop of Avranches that one finds evidence of Torrella's opinions in the *Dialogus*: his warning against the bad management of sufferers from *morbus gallicus* by empiricists, who so worsen their patients' condition that death results; and his call to protophysicians to intervene and put stop to this situation<sup>32</sup> (Plate 2).

Accuerendo in xpo patri et dno dno Ludonico de Bour-  
bonio Epfo dignissimo Abunensi. Gaspar eps sancte Juste  
Salute. Ad te in pntiam scribo: que magnopere diligo: co-  
lo: et obferuo: tam ppter tuas ingentes virtutes innatas: et  
etiam ppter acquiras: nobilitas ut te no fugat est pntiam  
virtutis: qua tu progenitores adepti sunt. quoque vestigia in-  
imitatus es. Scias velim me no soluz epoz: amicu esse veruz  
etia seruitoz: ecclesiasticoz amatoz: clericoz defensorez  
ppter virtute te. Cicerone. No modo pfecto sed etia ab-  
fentez amamus. His de causis ac etia propter peccata tuas  
que mihi pcepta fuerit: decrevi iterum hunc parvum tractatus  
impressoribus tradere: et eo maxime qui videat hunc scilicet  
mum pestiferum ac contagiosum morbum undique ab imperitis men-  
dosa cura et palliativa ac irregulari curari. qui in deteriores  
lapsus infirmos cadere faciunt. Quid de pntibus oris et gna-  
turis alcola a medicis nominatis. quid de perpetua arctica  
quid de nodostantibus digitoz ac alioz membris deus sit  
mibi testis quanta incommoda ac seua accidit ex inunctioni-  
bus istoz empiricoruz sequi vidit: et quot dies suos clausurunt  
pretereo. Sic enim morbus ut te non fugit omne corporis ar-  
monia deprimit et conturbat: qua natura fusa dei vincula  
nunt. Nemo est enim qui ambigat: quod absqz armonia corporis  
que ipsa sanitas a medicis appellat: actus corporis seu an-  
tie potentie possint perfici. Corpora enim inculpate sanas  
egre frustra virtutes aut scitias adipisci conantur. Legant  
igitur medici et chirurgi hunc tractatum: quibus egritudine  
cui are facultas datur. Ceteris vero imperitis et deceptoribus  
ne amplius hos false curent a prothomedicis prohibeatur  
ita. Vale feliciter.

Fig. 2. - Torrella's *De morbo gallico cum aliis*.  
Letter addressed to Louis of Bourbon, He Bishop of  
Avranches (c. A1v).

We can, then, provisionally conclude that the *De morbo gallico* must have been printed before Torrella wrote his *Dialogus*, i.e. not later than February 1500.

<sup>31</sup> *De morbo gallico*, signats. b<sub>3r</sub>, b<sub>3v</sub>. For the preparations containing mercury in the first edition, cfr. footnote 26 above.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, signat. a<sub>1v</sub>: « ... decrevi iterum hunc parvum tractatum impressoribus tradere, et eo maxime quum videam hunc sevissimum pestiferum ac contagiosum morbum undique ab imperitis mendosa cura et palliativa ac irregulari curari, qui in deteriores lapsos infirmos cadere faciunt ... Et quot dies suos clausurunt pretereo ... Ceteris vero imperitis et deceptoribus ne amplius hos false curent a prothomedicis prohibeatur ... ».

## 4. THE NOBILIARY TITLES CAESAR BORGIA HELD DURING HIS LIFE

The titles attributed to Caesar Borgia appear to differ (as we have seen) in every one of the works Torrella dedicated to the Borgia. These changes in title which correspond to those held by Caesar during his short life, will eventually allow us to place the edition of the *De morbo gallico* about 1498.

On 17 August 1498 (as is well known) Caesar Borgia finally received dispensation from the Roman Church Consistory for his release both from the order of deacons and from the cardinalate. On the same day he was given the dukedom of Valentinois by the king of France, Louis XII.<sup>33</sup> The *De morbo gallico* must therefore have been printed after 17 August 1498, because the Borgia is given the title of « Duke of Valentinois » in its dedicatory letter to him by Torrella (Plate 3).

On 1 October 1498 (as is also well known) the Borgia sailed for France, carrying with him an ambitious plan of papal diplomacy to Louis XII's court at Chinon, and Torrella travelled with him.<sup>34</sup> Caesar married Charlotte d'Albret, the sister of the king of Navarre, at Blois on 10 May 1499,<sup>35</sup> and during the same month was given titles by Louis XII to bear « the name and arms of France ». This enabled him to add « of France » to his family name.<sup>36</sup> The Borgia remained with his wife at the French court until early September 1499, and did not enter Rome until 26 February 1500.<sup>37</sup> Shortly thereafter, on 29 March 1500,

<sup>33</sup> L. PASTOR, *op. cit.*, VI, pp. 60-61; W. H. WOODWARD, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-134; L. COLLISON-MORLEY, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-100; M. MALLETT, *op. cit.*, pp. 148-150. Cfr. documents concerning Louis XII's awarding the dukedom of Valentinois to Caesar Borgia in P. ANSELME DE SAINTE-MARIE (Père), *Histoire Généalogique et Chronologique de la Maison Royale de France ...*, Paris, Compagnie des Libraires 1726-1733, V, pp. 517-520 [facsimile reprint: Paris, Ed. du Palais Royal; New York-London, Johnson Reprint Co. 1967].

<sup>34</sup> L. COLLISON-MORLEY, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-106; M. MALLETT, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-152. Torrella himself says in the foreword of his *Dialogus* that he went along with Caesar Borgia to France. Cfr. *Dialogus*, signat. a<sub>3</sub>r.

<sup>35</sup> L. PASTOR, *op. cit.*, VI, pp. 65-69; W. H. WOODWARD, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-144; L. COLLISON-MORLEY, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-110; M. MALLETT, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

<sup>36</sup> P. ANSELME DE SAINTE-MARIE (Père), *op. cit.*, V, p. 522: « Il [Caesar Borgia] obtint au mois de may 1499 des lettres patentes du roi Louis XII par lesquelles il fut adopté lui et sa posterité au nom et arms de France, avec permission d'en user en tous les actes. Il est qualifié Cesar Borgia de Francia, duc de Valentinois ... ».

<sup>37</sup> L. PASTOR, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-74; W. H. WOODWARD, *op. cit.*, pp. 144-171; L. COLLISON-MORLEY, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-127; M. MALLETT, *op. cit.*, pp. 153-157.

Ad Illustrissimū dñm Cesare de Borgia ducem Valentini Tractatus incipit de pudentia seu morbo Gallico editus a Gaspare Torrella Episcopo sancte Iude natione valentino.



Quoniam in his diebus inter loquendū fuerim ab Illustri Principe et dño meo Cesare de Borgia duce Valentini interrogatus: que nā esset hec pestifera egritudo: ab aliquibus noiera morbus sancti Iemena: a gallis morbus nepolitān<sup>us</sup> seu grossa varfola: ab Italia morbus gallicus: et an doctores aliquid scriperunt. et Gubern in tanto temporis curriculo nō fuit aliquod peculiare remedium compertū et approbatū. Et quare dolores magis infestant in nocte q̄ in die. Facile est enī questiones petere: solvere autem non est facile. Nam solvere vinculum non est ignorantis: primo silencio. Hanc onus et humeris meis impar impositum video. Sublimius et tibi unico benefactori et dño meo geram: quo ad vres potero conabo: in hoc breui compendio inserere ea que hinc inde in libris tam antiquorū q̄ modernorū medicorū reperire poterō. Accipe igitur Illustrissime dñe has meas rudes lucubraciones: quas cum maximo labore cōgregavi: et ne mirū: agitur enī annus decimus: circa eccliasica occupatus arti medicine minime vacare potui. Erūi profecto cōpiales huius apostolice artis opifices: qui hunc tractatū et corrigent et ampliabunt facilius: cū sit ratione aucte et experimēto vallatus. Quoniam enī tibi genus humanū obnoxius sit: nō est qui ambigat. nā ten pestifera tua ac tui causa morbus qui ab oibus imaginabatur in curabilis in p̄sentiā: nō solum eius essentia veritas et curatio modus cognoscitur. Et qua quidē cognitione infecti confidēt et bonā spem suscipiēt: que sola ipsa cōfidentia poterit esse curis et p̄fecte sanent: et iam p̄tercent. Nā ut ap̄me Nicola<sup>us</sup>

A ii

Fig. 3. - Torrella's *De morbo gallico cum aliis*. Dedicata to Caesar Borgia, He Druce of Valentinois (c. A2r).

Caesar was given the titles « Captain-General and Gonfalonier of the Church Army » by his father, the Pope Alexander VI.<sup>38</sup> All these titles, bestowed on him between 1498 and 1500, were attributed to the Borgia by Torrella at the beginning of the dedicatory letter of his *Dialogus*, written by 1 March 1500, but not printed until 31 October 1500.<sup>39</sup> Yet in his dedicatory letter of the *De morbo gallico* Caesar Borgia is

<sup>38</sup> L. PASTOR, *op. cit.*, VI, p. 74; W. H. WOODWARD, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-172; L. COLLISON-MORLEY, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

<sup>39</sup> *Dialogus*, signat. a<sub>3</sub>r: « Illustrissimo ac virtuosissimo domino domino Cesari Borgia de Francia duci Valentiniensi Sancte Romane Ecclesie ganfaronario ac generali capitaneo, Gaspar Torrella ... » Obviously, the titles « Captain-General and Gonfalonier of the Church Army » were added by Torrella before the book was published.

only given the title « Duke of Valentinois ». The most likely reason for this difference is that Torrella had sent the second edition of his *Tractatus* to press between the 17 August and 1 October 1498, just before he was to sail for France with Caesar Borgia. Presumably the *De morbo gallico* was printed before the end of 1498. Given the strong social demand for writings on *morbus gallicus* at the time, it is difficult to imagine why the printer would have delayed this second edition.

The presence of the Bishop of Avranches, Louis of Bourbon, as the addressee of this new edition does not provide any additional evidence in resolving the question of when the *De morbo gallico* was printed, as he held the French bishopric from 1484 to 1510. However, the fact that both men knew each other and were friends can easily be explained by the ambassadorial visits to Rome Louis of Bourbon had to be involved in as an active member of the French Parliament after 1483.<sup>40</sup>

Marini claimed that the *De morbo gallico* was printed a few days before the *Dialogus*.<sup>41</sup> This may well be. But if so, it seems surprising that in the *De morbo gallico* Torrella made no mention of the three mercury victims in the Borgian court he discusses in the *Dialogus*.<sup>42</sup> Further, by then Caesar Borgia already held his new titles « of France » and « Captain-General and Gonfalonier of the Church ». These titles did not appear along with that of « duke of Valentinois » in the dedication of the *De morbo gallico*.

Finally, the letter Torrella addressed to Louis of Bourbon at the very beginning of the *De morbo gallico* refutes the idea that the edition should be placed in the year 1493, as has been suggested by the Mazarine Library catalogue.<sup>43</sup> This would convert the *De morbo gallico* into the *editio princeps* of Torrella's *Tractatus* (1497). Yet this cannot have been the case. The date is much too early for a medical treatise on *morbus gallicus*. Caesar seems to be invested with the title of « Duke of Valentinois » given to him (as we have seen) in 1498. And, most importantly, in his letter to Louis of Bourbon Torrella says that he had decided to publish his *Tractatus* « again » (*iterum*).<sup>44</sup>

<sup>40</sup> C. EUBEL, *op. cit.*, II, p. 77; A. BAUDRILLART, *et al.* (eds.) *Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie Ecclésiastiques*, Paris, L. Letouzey et Ané 1912-, X, coll. 132-133.

<sup>41</sup> G. MARINI, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 263-264.

<sup>42</sup> Cfr. footnote 29 above.

<sup>43</sup> Cfr. footnote 11 above.

<sup>44</sup> Cfr. footnote 9 above. The origin of this mistake seems to be a misprint which changed the date « MCCCCLXXXVII » in the first edition (signat. c<sub>4</sub>r) into

The above arguments are, I trust, sufficient to establish that the *De morbo gallico cum aliis*, the second edition of Torrella's *Tractatus cum consiliis contra pudendam seu morbum gallicum* (Rome, P. de la Turre, 22 Nov 1497), must have been printed *circa* 1498 and certainly not later than 1500. Hence it must also be an incunabular edition.

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« MCCCCLXXXIII » in the second one (signat. b<sub>4</sub>r): Torrella says that the five *consilia* making up the second part of his book are chosen among « seventeen » (in the *Tractatus*) or « many » (*plurimos* in the *De morbo gallico*) patients he 'cured' during September and October « 1497 » (*Tractatus*) or « 1493 » (*De morbo gallico*). By comparing the first edition to the second new changes of dates concerning different facts can be detected two more times (the year « 1497 » in the *Tractatus*, signats. d<sub>1</sub>r, d<sub>2</sub>v becomes « 1496 » in the *De morbo gallico*, signats. b<sub>4</sub>v, b<sub>6</sub>r). However, two other dates remain identical in both editions (the years « 1493 » and « 1497 » in the *Tractatus*, signats. a<sub>3</sub>v, e<sub>1</sub>v, and in the *De morbo gallico*, signats. a<sub>3</sub>v, b<sub>8</sub>v). Given evident inconsistencies within the same text, these changes of dates cannot be significant, but must be attributed to misprints.